

Devotions – January 2-8, 2022

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EVERY MORNING NEW - New Year's Resolutions

Our theme for this week, “**Every Morning New**” is taken from the title of a devotional book written by our now deceased inaugural ELCA Bishop, Herbert W. Chilstrom, and his wife Corrine.

After retirement, Herb writes, they began each day with a walk. They sang appropriate hymns like “Again thy Glorious Sun Doth rise”, and “Morning has Broken” which led to the title of their book. As we begin a new year, we lift up some New Year's resolutions to guide our spiritual walk in 2022 and to help us experience “**Every Morning New**”

Sunday, January 2, 2022

Resolution #1: **REMEMBER THOSE WE LOVE**

Text: Galatians 5:22

“... **the fruit of the spirit is love.**”

One of the blessings the Chilstrom's received in their morning walks was to bring to memory many of the people who had touched their lives. We would like to share one who touched our lives.

Former NGLS Bishop, Dale Skogman, who died in 2021, was one of those whose love inspired our faith journey. A brilliant man of great faith, he modeled his faith by the way he lived. He studied scripture, prayed faithfully and gave of himself to others in the name of Christ. He had a great sense of humor and used it to help hold folks accountable for their responsibilities and in their faith commitments. He and Jo were models of Christian hospitality. They planned time from their busy schedules to invite folks for meals and fellowship; and one never left their home without a time of prayer and thanksgiving.

Let's pray: *Dear Lord, thank you for making our **Every Morning New** by bringing us into relationship with the Skogmans and for the inspiration their lives have been for us. Amen*



Monday, January 3, 2022

Resolution #2: **FORGIVE**

Text: Matthew 18:21-22

Peter asked “How many times must I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus says, “not seven times but as many as seventy-seven times.”

We know the answer, it is ongoing; we need to forgive as often as is needed.

During my time with prisoners at Marquette Branch Prison, I had experiences with many of them facing the need to forgive others for perceived sins against them. We asked them to make a list of people they held in unforgiveness. At days end we prayed with them as they asked God to help them forgive those on their list. This became a very emotional time as they pondered their decision. One thing they learned was how good it feels to let go the burden of hating. Holding on to unforgiveness only harms the one who retains the anger.

Let's pray: *Dear Lord, as we enter this new year, let us bring to mind those whom we hold in unforgiveness and help us, and those in prison, learn to forgive. Relieve us of the heavy burden of unforgiveness, that we may begin **Every Morning New**. Amen*



Tuesday, January 4, 2022

Resolution #3: **TRAVEL LIGHT**

Text: Luke 12:15

“Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”

Our “stuff” can be a burden. Consider the issues involved with hoarding, and the physical, social and emotional stresses it brings. It can be exhausting trying to protect, keep track of and care for all the things we think we need in this life. Often, when we try to pass on beloved family items, our kids don’t even want them! When we travel, we are bogged down by too many heavy suitcases. Storage units are everywhere - full of stuff we don’t even know we have. Jesus tells his disciples to, “Take nothing for your journey” (Luke 9:3) as he sends them on their life’s mission. Our stuff has the potential to create barriers and take our focus off the real purpose of our life’s journey.

Let's pray: *Dear Lord, may we approach the new year with as little baggage as possible, free to welcome **Every Morning New** in 2022. Amen*

New Year's Resolutions

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Resolution #4: **DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEONE ELSE**

Text: James 2:8

“... you shall love neighbor as yourself.”

We sometimes get so busy with our own lives we think we don't have any time to give to others. Even if we are aware of those in need, we don't know how to approach them. We are just not comfortable initiating the conversation.

Here are some ideas we have found helpful:

First, pray about the situation. Ask God to help you step out of your “Comfort Zone” and then take God's lead. Often the one you were hesitant about will surprise you resulting in a new relationship.

Second, reaching out to others need not be a big deal. During the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, several of our church members made monthly phone calls to folks who were homebound or just lonely to inquire about how they were doing. The calls were well received and produced some lasting friendships.

Other ideas include: send a text, write a note, send a card, bring a meal, meet for coffee, offer to shovel snow.

Another very important way to reach out is to offer to pray for them and then do it. Be sure to follow up with them so they know you are including them in your prayers.

One motto to live by is “Make a friend, be a friend and then bring that friend to Christ.” After you have a relationship, invite them to come with you to worship. You may be surprised at how easy it becomes to invite friends to begin or improve their relationship with our Lord Jesus. One friend of mine likes to ask, “How are you getting along with the Lord?” It's a pretty safe question and can produce amazing results.

Let's pray: *Dear Lord, give us courage to step out in faith and reach out to those who need us. May we be your instruments to help make **Every Morning New** for others. Amen*

New Year's Resolutions

Thursday, January 6, 2022

Resolution #5: REMEMBER MY BAPTISM

Text: Acts 2:38

“Repent and be baptized....so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Today is a holy day in the Christian world - The Epiphany of our Lord. We often think of it as:

1. The visit of the Three Kings bringing gifts and paying homage to the baby Jesus.
2. The season between Christmas and Lent in the church year.
3. Time to take down the tree and put away the Christmas decorations.
4. The 12th day of Christmas when “My true love gave to me the 12 Drummers Drumming” and all that other stuff.

In the Eastern Orthodox church, Epiphany is celebrated as a remembrance of the baptism of Jesus. My dictionary defines “Epiphany” as understanding something in a new or very clear way, a sudden insight or revealing.

Let’s pause today to think about what understanding or insight is being revealed about Jesus and God’s plan for our lives. Perhaps the Eastern tradition of remembering Jesus’ - and our own - baptism would be good way to start this New Year - and to begin **Every Morning New.**

Let’s pray: *“Lord, at Your Epiphany pour your wondrous light on me.”* (John Ylvisaker from his *Borning Cry Songbook*)

New Year's Resolutions

Friday, January 7, 2022

Resolution #6: LOOK FOR THE LIGHT

Text: Colossians 1:12

“Thanks to the Father who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.”

After two years of not visiting our daughter and her husband in Denver, we did so in November. They live on the eleventh floor facing east. When I got up the first morning it was dark outside, but soon the sun began to rise and brilliantly overcame the darkness with a glorious pink and then orange and red glow. My thoughts went to Jesus, the light of the world overcoming the darkness of our lives. This brought me to an experience in Marquette Branch Prison where we lit a candle in a darkened Chapel. One candle overcame the darkness. We shared the impact one Christian can have by bringing the light of Christ into the darkness inside the prison. Observing the life changing results of that light in the men we served was truly an **Every Morning New** experience.

“Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome”. *Holden Village Evening Vesper Service*



Saturday, January 8, 2022

Resolution # 7: EXERCISE

Text: Hebrews 12:12

“Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.”

We know that a balanced life requires many types of exercise - physical, mental, social, and spiritual. The phrase, “If you don’t use it, you lose it” applies in all areas of our lives. Let’s talk about some of the ways we can exercise our faith and build spiritual muscle.

- ❖ Set aside a time and place for daily prayer and meditation.
- ❖ Regular worship - in person or online.
- ❖ Use published daily devotional guides (like *Every Morning New* or *Christ in Our Home*)
- ❖ Regular Bible Study or Lifelong Faith Formation classes.
- ❖ Write a week’s worth of PrayFaithfully.

- ❖ Begin **Every Morning New** with an acknowledgement of our baptism as beloved children of God.

One of the best parts of our week is a long-distance Bible Study of the week's gospel with our son in California. It's the best kind of exercise in many ways!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The logo for "New Year's Resolutions" features the words "New Year's" in a large, bold, black serif font with a yellow outline, stacked above the word "Resolutions" in a smaller, similar font. The entire text is set against a white background.